United Nations

Press Release

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General continues diplomatic efforts to resolve situation of detainees in Israel and Lebanon; says United Nations is only channel for negotiations.

- Security Council holds consultations to discuss long-term verification of disarmament of Iraq, situation in Cyprus, and procedural aspects of election of new Secretary-General.

- Secretary-General accepts invitation to pay official visit to Iran on Tuesday, 10 September.

- Secretary-General expresses serious concern about present state of world economy and environment in opening address at third round of preparations for 1992 Earth Summit.

- Secretary-General withdraws proposal to reduce military strength of United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission due to increased level of activity in demilitarized zone between two countries.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar met today at noon with Iran's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Kamal Kharrazi, as part of his diplomatic efforts to resolve the situation of detainees held in Israel and Lebanon.

Following the meeting, he told correspondents that through the Iranians he was able to communicate with the different groups holding the hostages in Lebanon. Therefore, he said, the Iranian Government was not his interlocutor, it was a "channel" between him and the groups holding detainees. He had not heard anything during his meeting which would make him lose hope in the resolution of this situation and he would continue his efforts with dedication, patience and perseverance.

Asked if he would be passing on information to the Israelis about their servicemen held in Lebanon, or if the Israelis themselves would be directly in

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touch with the groups holding detainees, the Secretary-General replied there was "only one channel, that is the United Nations". The Israelis were committed to work through the United Nations, he said.

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The Security Council met this morning in closed consultations to discuss the long-term verification of Iraqi disarmament in accordance with the provisions of resolution 687 (1991) setting the terms for the cease-fire in the Gulf conflict.

The Council had before it two reports: on nuclear arms (S/22872), and on chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missiles (S/22871), respectively. Both reports remain under continuing review by the Council.

Members of the Council also briefly discussed Cyprus and procedural aspects of the election of the new Secretary-General.

The Council is scheduled to hold consultations tomorrow morning on the election of a new member of the International Court of Justice, with a view to holding a formal meeting shortly afterwards.

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The Secretary-General has accepted an invitation from the President of Iran to pay an official visit to the country. Mr. Perez de Cuellar will be travelling to Teheran on Tuesday, 10 September.

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The third round of preparations for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development began yesterday in Geneva.

Opening the general debate, the Secretary-General said that the Conference, known as the Earth Summit, would be one of the major events in 1992. It would provide a forum for finding ways to guarantee economic development and social progress for all peoples while protecting the ecological health of the planet.

He expressed his serious concern about the present state of the world economy and the environment. One human being out of five was living in absolute poverty. There had hardly been any progress in the last 10 years and in some countries the situation had even deteriorated, he said.

Also addressing the meeting, the Secretary-General of the Conference, Maurice Strong, said that with only nine months remaining, much remained to be done by Governments before they would be ready to take the necessary decisions in Brazil.

At its third session, scheduled to conclude on 4 September, the preparatory committee is negotiating specific proposals for action for

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sustainable development of environmental resources and in such areas as health, education, human settlements, food security and environmental emergencies, including the impact of the recent war in the Persian Gulf.

These proposals -- known collectively as Agenda 21 -- are based largely on action plans endorsed by previous United Nations conferences, but were drawn up with the idea of dealing with the environmental and development aspects of each issue on an integrated basis.

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